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The range of *Tchagra minuta reichenowi*

by C. W. BENSON and M. P. STUART IRWIN

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It has been usual to include eastern Southern Rhodesia as within the range of *Tchagra minuta anchietae*, the latest author to do so being Rand, in Mayr & Greenway (1960). However, Clancey (1959) described a new form, *T. m. remota*, ranging from the eastern highlands of Southern Rhodesia to southern Nyasaland. Benson (1960) follows him in using the name *remota*, the differences between material from Southern Rhodesia and Northern Rhodesia (*anchietae*) being readily apparent. Neither of these authors, however, was able to examine any material from East Africa. Thanks to Mrs. B. P. Hall and Mr. J. G. Williams, we have had the loan of specimens from the British Museum and the Coryndon Museum respectively, in order to decide whether *remota* really was distinct from East African *reichenowi*. We are also grateful to Mr. O. Prozesky for the loan of several Nyasaland specimens, in the Transvaal Museum. The observations which follow are based also on all the material from the Rhodesias and Nyasaland in the National Museum, Bulawayo. Immature specimens, in which subspecific differences are difficult to perceive, are not used. They have the centre of the crown mottled with white or tawny, the mantle streaked with black, and the bill brownish horn instead of black. Certain little known localities have been verified from Reichenow (1902) or Swynnerton & Hayman (1950).

Eight specimens from eastern Southern Rhodesia agree well in colour with three from north-eastern Tanganyika, one being from Mtoni, in the Bagamoyo District at 6°27'S., 38°49'E., and two from the Usambara Mts. On the other hand, three from further west in Tanganyika, from the Uluguru and Nguru Mts. and from Njombe, may be placed with *anchietae*. Professor E. Stresemann has kindly informed us that nine specimens from eastern Tanganyika in the Berlin Museum agree in colour with *reichenowi*. These include the specimen which he mentions as the type, collected by G. A. Fischer on the Pangani River, five from the Usambara Mts., one from Dar-es-Salaam, one from the Uluguru Mts., and one from Kisasi (5°30'S., 35°30'E.). On the other hand he reports that four from further west, from Songea, Neu-Langenburg and Kissabu (both at the north end

of Lake Nyasa), and Urungu-Kitangulu (south-east shore of Lake Tanganyika) are better placed with *anchietae*. He adds that the colour-differences between the two series are similar to those between *remota* and *anchietae* as given by Clancey. Of seven Nyasaland specimens which we have examined, one from Port Herald and one from the Ncheu-Neno boundary, especially the latter, agree best with eastern Southern Rhodesia (*remota*) and eastern Tanganyika specimens (*reichenowi*). On the other hand, one each from Fort Hill, the Songwe River, 20 miles north-west of Karonga, Chinteche and Mlanje are nearer to *anchietae*.

It remains to decide whether *remota* can be distinguished from *reichenowi* on size. The following measurements are available:—

	Wing	Tail	Culmen from base
Eastern Southern Rhodesia (<i>remota</i>)			
5♂	74, 74, 75, 77, 77	72, 73, 73, 74, 74	21, 22, 23, 23, 23
3♀	73, 74, 75	69, 71, 75	21, 22, 22
Nyasaland (<i>remota</i>)			
1♂	76	75	22
1♀	76	70	22
Nyasaland (<i>anchietae</i>)			
3♂	73, 74, 75	69, 69, 72	20, 22, 22
2♀	74, 74	73, 75	21, 22
Tanganyika (<i>anchietae</i>)			
3♂	73, 76, 78	70, 72, 72	21, 22
Tanganyika (<i>reichenowi</i>)			
2♂	71, 75	67, 72	21, 22
1♀	69	67	21

Professor Stresemann has given us the following wing-measurements of the Tanganyika specimens in the Berlin Museum. A male of *reichenowi* measures 70 mm., three females 72, 74, 78 mm., three others, sex not stated, 69, 69, 73, 74, 74 mm. Three males of *anchietae* measure 75, 75, 77 mm., one other specimen, sex not stated, 76 mm., and 80 mm. in one from Angola.

It seems to us that, while there is a tendency to larger size in *remota*, the difference is not such as to justify its recognition. Accordingly *reichenowi* must be regarded as ranging from Lamu, in coastal Kenya, through eastern Tanganyika to southern Nyasaland and eastern Southern Rhodesia. The position in northern Portuguese East Africa requires further investigation. *Reichenowi* must occur in coastal areas, but it is possible that *anchietae* occurs inland, along the east side of the Lake Nyasa, since a specimen from Mlanje, in south-eastern Nyasaland, certainly agrees better with *anchietae* than *reichenowi*.

Mr. C. M. N. White has examined the specimens with us, and agrees with our finding.

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On western Palaearctic *Anthus pratensis* (Linnaeus)

by P. A. CLANCEY

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Kenneth Williamson, *Bird Migration*, vol. i, 2, 1959, pp. 88-91, discusses once again the geographical variation exhibited by the western Palaearctic populations of the Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis* (Linnaeus), 1758: Sweden, recognising the richly coloured insular populations of Iceland, the Faeroes, and, presumably, "Highland" Britain as subspecifically discrete under the name *A. p. theresae* Meinertzhagen, 1953: Achill Island, western Ireland. Earlier but purely taxonomic papers dealing with the same question are those of Clancey, *Bull. B.O.C.*, vol. lxiii, 1942, pp. 6, 7; *ibid.*, vol. lxviii, 1948, pp. 54-56; and Meinertzhagen, *ibid.*, vol. lxxiii, 1953, p. 43. Vaurie, *Birds of the Palearctic Fauna*, 1959, p. 69, admits the distinction of *A. p. theresae*, the range of which he restricts, following Meinertzhagen, *loc. cit.*, to "Western Ireland", while *A. p. whistleri* Clancey, 1942: Dornoch, Sutherlandshire, northern Scotland, is placed in the synonymy of *A. p. pratensis*.

As correctly pointed out by Williamson in his valuable paper the two names listed above are available for the saturated, western, "Atlantic" populations of this common pipit, but he has unnecessarily complicated the issue by claiming that the *Type* of *A. p. whistleri* is subspecifically indeterminate, and that the name for the enlarged western insular race should be the much later *A. p. theresae*. I believe that there are solid grounds for questioning the validity of the claim that the name *A. p. whistleri* is inapplicable to the western, "Atlantic" race of the Meadow Pipit.

A. p. whistleri was described during the darkest days of the War years on the basis of a comparison between series of freshly moulted autumn and breeding birds collected in the Dornoch district of south-eastern Sutherlandshire in 1938 (August-September) and 1942 (June), and the limited Continental material at that time available in the collections of the British Museum (Nat. Hist.) and Dr. James M. Harrison, of Sevenoaks. It is of importance to note that much of the paratypical series of *A. p. whistleri* consisted of actual breeding birds shot at the type-locality in June, 1942, so that as far as the differential diagnosis is concerned, *A. p. whistleri* is a name correctly given to the breeding Meadow Pipit of the Scottish Highlands and no other. Indeed, the distinctions given for *A. p. whistleri* in the original description are mainly those to be discerned in a critical study of breeding material, though later work on *A. p. whistleri* and *A. p. pratensis* has shown that by far the best and most reliable racial characters separating these two forms are to be seen in autumn-taken birds.